that certain criminal gangs were active outside the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Safdarjung hospital and were pilfering belongings of patients and their relatives. The Delhi Police have reported that no such activities have come to their notice. However, the police staff posted at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and in the Safdarjung hospital have been directed to be vigilant.

Sale of Indian skulls in Nepal

1380. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item published in 'Nav Bharat Times' Patna Edition dated 12th August, 1991 captioned as "Bhartiya Narmund Nepal Mein Sazkar Bikte Hein"; and

(b) if so, what measures have been taken to stop this henious trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has seen reports that some Indian nationals are smuggling human skulls to Nepal and that the Nepalese police, as per local laws, destroy the skulls when seized. Ministry of Home Affairs has been informed to alert the State Governments concerned to take necessary action and instruct the concerned authorities to take measures to prevent such smuggling.

Status of persons of Indian origin living in Hong Kong

1381. SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI:
KUMARI ALIA:

Will the Minister of EXERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of persons of Indian origin now living in Hong Kong are likely to become stateless when Hong Kong reverts to China in 1997;

(b) if so, the number of such Indians likely to be affected;

(c) the present status of such persons with regard to their nationality/ citizenship;

(d) the action proposed to be taken by Government of India to prevent such persons becoming State-less;

(e) whether the matter was taken up by Government with the Government of U. K.; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (f) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) There are about 5000 persons of Indian origin in Hong Kong who hold either British Dependant Territories Citizenship (BTDC) or British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) passports, issued by the British Government. These persons are part of a group of approximately 3.25 million persons with similar states (British Dependant Territories Citizenship/British National (Overseas) in Hong Kong. The holders of these documents are not entitled to the automatic right of abode in the United Kingdom. This category of persons is, however, expected to qualify for continued abode in Hong Kong after the territory reverts to Chinese sovereignty in 1997.

(d) to (f) The matter has been raised with the British Government. It has been the consistent position of the Government of India that the British Government has basic responsibility towards this group of persons and that it should take necessary steps to safeguard the status of these persons as British citizens.